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Minimum bus fares in mufassal

* 158 Q.—Sri M. NARAYANA KURUP : Will the Hon. the Minister for Religious Endowments and Transport be pleased to state whether the Government have taken any decision on the question of reduction of minimum bus fare of 5 annas in mufassal?

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN : The Government have recently examined the question of reduction of the maximum bus fare of 5 annas in the mufassal and have decided that the existing orders fixing a fare not exceeding 5 annas for distances of less than 8 miles in the plains in the mufassal should be continued.

Sri M. NARAYANA KURUP : Is it not a fact, Sir, that the Hon. Minister promised to reduce the fare on more than one occasion and assured the House and confirmed it later. Now what is the reason to go back on the assurance given by the Hon. Minister.

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN : I did not promise to reduce it. I only promised that the matter would be examined. After deep examination we came to the conclusion that the present rate should continue.

Sri P. G. MANICKAM : காலணா, அரையணா, முக்காலணா முதலிய சில்லறைகளைச் சேர்க்காமல், தூரத்திற்குத் தகுந்தபடி அணாக்களாகவும், ரூபாய்களாகவும் பஸ் கட்டணங்களை வசூலிப்பதற்கான சட்டத்தை அரசாங்கம் இயற்றுமா என்பதை அறியவிரும்புகிறேன்.

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN : இப்போதிருக்கும் நிலைமையில் அது முடியாது.

Dr. K. B. MENON : Is the reason for the decision of the Government due to the fact that reduction of the fare is uneconomical?

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN : Originally when the minimum was fixed at the rate of four annas, the idea was to prevent on the one hand short distance passengers displacing long distance passengers and on the other hand, to save long distance passengers from congestion consequent on passengers bound for short distance getting into the buses. Both these considerations are still valid. In view of the fall in the value of the money, at present five annas is equal to four annas in 1955 when the rate was fixed. It would, therefore, be hazardous, on the complaint of only one district, to reduce the minimum fare to four annas and the existing minimum which some owners are themselves reducing, deserves to be continued in the public interest.

Sri T. C. NARAYANAN NAMBIAR : Will the Government be kind enough to consider the question of giving half-fare concessions at least to the student population in rural parts who will have to go for two or three miles for their high schools. Generally the high schools are far away from the rural parts. Therefore, will the Government take suitable steps in the matter?

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THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : I think, some bus operators are really charging less than five annas for short distance routes.

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP : When this question was raised during the debate on the Budget for 1955–56, the Hon. Minister, in winding up the debate, said that Members would have glad news before they reached home. Did not the Hon. Minister intend that there would be a reduction in the minimum fare of five annas as it now exists?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : Sir, the Government tried all possible methods to see that the rates were reduced. But this complaint is only from the district of Malabar whereas in other districts bus operators seem to feel that there is no need for reduction at all. Therefore, when I said that hon. Members would receive encouraging news, I did not mean that the rates would be reduced. I meant that the Government would pay sympathetic consideration to the suggestion made by the hon. Member.

SRI K. KUNHI MOHAMED SHAFEE : As far as the Malabar district is concerned, the minimum bus charge is five annas, in certain places but in certain other places, it is three annas. For instance, in my place, there are one or two buses running on Perintalmanna-Anakayam route and they collect only three annas for a distance of five or six miles. Therefore, the question of protecting either the bus owner or the long distance passengers does not arise. Considering this reality, will the Government reduce the minimum bus charge throughout the district from five annas to three annas?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : The hon. Member himself has just admitted that in certain places, they are charging only three annas for a distance of six miles. Therefore, the question of reducing the present rate does not arise at all?

SRI T. C. NARAYANAN NAMBIAR : The Hon. Minister has just now stated that certain bus operators are charging only three annas in Malabar. As far as my experience goes, in my constituency, four buses are in operation and for a distance of two miles from Pappinesseri to Kalyasseri, five annas are charged. From Kalyasseri to Parissinikadavu—a distance of three miles, five annas are charged. So also for a distance of one mile, from Chingala to Srikantapuram, five annas are charged even for the students. Therefore, will the Government see that proper steps are taken to collect only half-fare for short distances from the students?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : I am sorry, I cannot promise it. It is already too late and the new Kerala State is going to be formed shortly where the hon. Member can raise this question and that Government may consider it.

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SRI A. GOVINDASWAMY NAYAGAR : பஸ் கட்டணத்தைக் குறைத்தால் பஸ் முதலாளிகளின் வெறுப்பை அடையவேண்டியிருக்கும் என்று அரசாங்கம் பயந்து, அதன் காரணமாக பஸ் கட்டணத்தைக் குறைக்காமல் இருக்கிறதா என்று அறிய விரும்புகிறேன்.

MR. SPEAKER : I disallow that question.

SRI P. K. GOPALAKRISHNAN : Are the Government aware that a minimum charge of less than five annas is fixed in some of the neighbouring States. For instance, in the Travancore-Cochin State a minimum charge of three annas is fixed and there is no insecurity felt either by long distance passengers or bus operators. So, in view of the experience gained by one of the neighbouring States, will the Government reconsider their earlier decision, and reduce the minimum charge here also?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : As I said, this complaint is not coming from any district except Malabar. Therefore, we cannot make exception in this case.

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP : On a previous occasion the Hon. Minister stated that it was such a serious matter that the Hon. Minister dealing with it alone cannot decide it and the Cabinet had to decide it. May I know whether the decision not to reduce the minimum fare of five annas is a Cabinet decision?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : No, Sir, it was not a Cabinet decision. The Minister for Finance and the Minister for Transport have to decide it.

SRI A. IYANAR : தற்போது மூன்று மைல், நான்கு மைல்களுக்குக்கூட ஐந்தணா வசூலிப்பதானது பெரும்பாலான ஜனங்களுக்கு மிகவும் சிரமமாக இருப்பதால், குறைந்தது நான்கு மைல்களுக்கு உட்பட்ட தூரத்திற்காவது ஐந்தணாக் கட்டணத்தைக் குறைப்பதற்கு அரசாங்கம் முன் வருமா ?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : இதையெல்லாம் பரிசீலித்துத்தான் அரசாங்கம் ஒரு முடிவுக்கு வந்திருக்கிறது. இவ்வளவு சீக்கிரம் முடிவை மாற்ற முடியாது. இன்னும் நாளடைவில் இதைத் திருத்தமுடியுமா என்று யோசிப்போம்.

SRI C. KANDASAMY : ஐந்து அணாவானது மிக அதிகப்படியான கட்டணம் என்று ஏகோபித்த அபிப்பிராயம் இருக்கிறது. அரசாங்கம் சொல்லும் கஷ்டங்களையும் கணக்கில் எடுத்துக்கொள்ள வேண்டியிருக்கிறது. ஆகவே குறிப்பிட்ட பாதைகளில் செல்லும் பஸ்களில் சிலவற்றை வழியில் நிற்காமல் நேரே செல்லும் (த்ரூ பஸ்) பஸ்களாகவும், மீதி பஸ்களை வழியில் ஆங்காங்கே நின்று செல்லும் பஸ்களாகவும் ஓட்டுவதற்கு ஏற்பாடு செய்து, அந்த நிலைமையிலாவது கட்டணத்தைக் குறைப்பதற்கு அரசாங்கம் முன் வருமா ? அதாவது, ஒரு வழியில் 10 பஸ்கள் ஓடினால் 7 பஸ்களை நேரே செல்லும் பஸ்களாகவும், 3 பஸ்களை இடையிடையே நின்று செல்லும் பஸ்களாவம் ஓட்டுவதற்கு ஏற்பாடு செய்தாவது கட்டணத்தைக் குறைப்பதற்கு அரசாங்கம் முன்வருமா ?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : கனம் அங்கத்தினர் சொன்ன யோசனை பரிசீலனை செய்யப்படும்.